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State Dept. review completed

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
NATIONAL FOREIGN ASSESSMENT CENTER

HUMAN RIGHTS REVIEW
(1-14 September 1978)

SOVIET UNION

--Jewish emigration from the Soviet Union has increased dramatically during the last year, and continues to accelerate. If the rate for the first eight months is projected to the end of the year, as many as 30,000 Jews will receive exit visas in 1978, considerably more than any year since the cutback after the peak year of 1973. Soviet willingness to permit larger numbers of Jews to leave is probably due to a combination of domestic and foreign policy considerations.

In deciding to relax emigration restrictions, Moscow may have been motivated in part by a desire to demonstrate that its internal policies are more flexible when they are not held up to public examination and criticism by the US Government. The trend toward increased emigration has seemed to run counter to other aspects of US-Soviet relations. Tension has characterized overall bilateral relations during the last year, and until quite recently Moscow had demonstrated little inclination to accommodate the US in other areas. The rising emigration rate has coincided with an unusually harsh crackdown on internal dissent, perpetrated in the face of strong US official protests. Moreover, even as emigration as a whole increased, precisely those Jewish activists who had attracted the greatest Western support continued to have difficulty obtaining permission to leave. Most of those leaving are first-time applicants. Few refuseniks (those previously refused permission to leave) have succeeded in obtaining exit visas. Soviet authorities have not publicized their more lenient policy on emigration in general, but have done little to hide their intransigence toward the refuseniks, who publicize their desire to emigrate. The regime apparently has wanted to impress on both the highly visible refuseniks and on their Western supporters that public

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pressure to emigrate is counter-productive. Similarly, the decision to release a number of refuseniks following talks with Senator Kennedy may have been intended, at least in part, to signal the US Administration that quiet diplomacy is more effective than public protest in securing concessions.

In permitting increased emigration, the regime is probably also influenced by domestic concerns. Many Jews in Moscow believe the higher rate of emigration merely reflects an increase in applications to emigrate in the wake of the Helsinki accords. They reason that the authorities have permitted increased emigration because they were not prepared to cope with the much larger refusenik communities that would have resulted from refusals. Supporting this interpretation is the fact that no new faces have appeared in the activist refusenik community during the last year. The costs of emigration to the regime are numerous: the departure of the relatively well-educated Jews creates a "brain drain," poses security problems when emigrants possess information of interest to Western intelligence, and runs the risk of having a Pandora's box effect in the polyglot Soviet borderlands. Soviet authorities may have decided, however, that the domestic costs of restricting emigration are even greater than the costs of emigration. It is possible that, except in cases which would give the appearance of yielding to external pressure, the regime has reached the point where it prefers to release Jews wishing to leave, seeing them as an unreliable and unassimilable element in Soviet society.

During recent weeks rumors have circulated in Odessa and Moscow that emigration will be cut off before the 1980 summer Olympics in Moscow. If these rumors are true, they could provide a partial explanation for the higher rate of emigration currently permitted. Soviet authorities may want to do all they can to prevent Jewish protests during the Olympics, especially if they mean to ban Israel from the games. Since the majority of Jewish emigrants are from provincial areas, however, current emigration is not likely to eliminate this problem for the regime. If Moscow wanted to use emigration policy to preempt possible demonstrations, the logical way would be to allow the more visible refuseniks in Moscow and Leningrad--precisely the activists who could create problems for the authorities in 1980--to depart.

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--The Soviet government has unexpectedly granted an exit visa to a prominent physicist, Sergei M. Polikanov, who in recent months had become an important leader in Moscow dissident circles.

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The 51-year-old nuclear researcher last year broke with his privileged scientific colleagues to denounce official restrictions on his personal and professional life. He has been expelled from the Communist Party, of which he was a member for 22 years, and dismissed from his position as head of a research laboratory at the Dubna Atomic Research Center north of Moscow.

Polikanov, an Order of Lenin winner and internationally known researcher into the composition and structure of the atomic nucleus, told Western reporters that he was called to the Moscow visa office and told his application to travel to Denmark would be approved. Polikanov had spent some time there in the 1960s, working at the Nils Bohr Institute. He said he intends to do research work in Denmark for a year and then will decide where else he might try to live. As a corresponding member of the Soviet Academy of Sciences, he enjoyed extraordinary prestige and privilege.

EASTERN EUROPE

--Czechoslovakia: Some Czechoslovak dissidents, in reaction to the unabating pressure of police surveillance and other harassment, are reportedly thinking of leaving the country.

A signatory of the dissident Charter 77 manifesto has told the US Embassy that 30 to 50 people associated with the Chartist movement may soon seek to leave Czechoslovakia. Among these are Charter spokesperson Marta Kubisova and her husband, who are considering immigration to the US. Kubisova indicated several months ago that she will be stepping down as spokesperson this autumn.

The Czechoslovak authorities offered in early 1977 to let dissidents emigrate and will probably continue this policy as a means of draining the strength of the movement. Few dissidents, however, have taken the option and, in any event, the departure of even as many as 50 signatories little involved in dissident activism would not seriously weaken the movement.

LATIN AMERICA

--Colombia: Last week the government of recently elected President Turbay promulgated a tough new statute designed to control Colombia's serious problems of common crime, terrorism, and political subversion. The new measures will not only provide stiffer prison sentences for specific crimes such as kidnaping, but will also regulate the broadcasting of radio and television communications "relative to public order." According to government spokesmen, the severe penalties do not lessen Colombia's dedication to the principles of human rights and will not infringe on the civil rights of citizens.

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Most Colombians do not seem to be concerned by the implications or potential abuses of such a security law. Indeed, many Colombians apparently find Turbay's strong, decisive actions to be a welcome contrast to what they regarded as the weakness and indecision of the Lopez administration--particularly during its final months in power. Their initial enthusiastic support for the statute also stems from a belief that it will quickly restore public peace and, as a result, encourage investment and promote economic growth.

Not everyone, however, supports Turbay's security package. One Bogota bar association plans to challenge the new statute in the Supreme Court because of its ambiguous wording and other "legal" defects. In addition, some union leaders have expressed concern that the decree will be used to impede organized labor's ability to voice its needs and grievances through strikes and public protests.

There is no evidence that Turbay intends to use the security statute for repressive purposes. The new law appears to be a logical--and badly needed--first step toward reducing the havoc and fear wrought by criminals, terrorists, and insurgents in Colombia. During the four years of the Lopez administration, for example, there were 324 reported kidnapings in Colombia with ransom payments totaling $158 million. During the same period, the various guerrilla organizations engaged in increasingly bold urban operations, while the nation's illegal drug trade expanded into a $1-billion-a-year industry.

Even as the new law was being unveiled, a group of assassins made a daylight entry into the home of a former Minister of Government, Rafael Pardo, and murdered him. Bogota officials believe the attack was carried out by members of an urban guerrilla gang and may be related to Pardo's role in suppressing last September's general strike. The assassination may also be an act in defiance of the security statute and could be the first in a series of reprisals against Turbay's new "get tough" policy.

In order to fulfill his campaign promises, Turbay will have to tackle each of Colombia's many crime problems separately and systematically. In the process, he may well have to implement even more stringent security measures in order to restore and preserve the democracy that some Colombians believe has been strained to the breaking point in recent years.

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--Chile: In a major speech on 11 September, marking the fifth anniversary of the military overthrow of the Allende government, Chilean

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President Pinochet said that a new constitution would be submitted to the voters next year, but that elections under the new constitution to create a civilian government would not be held until 1985.

As he has done in previous anniversary addresses, Pinochet discussed the nation's social and economic situation and its international relations. He touched on a number of sensitive subjects, including the Letelier case. Pinochet asserted that US "interventionist tendencies" have not helped US-Chilean relations, but he saw some hopeful signs. The Chilean Government, he said, has cooperated on the Letelier case and attaches great importance to efforts by both governments to keep the case in the judicial sector and out of the political arena "where interested parties have sought to push both countries."

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--Bolivia: The issue of rescheduling a presidential election continues to dominate the political scene in Bolivia as opposition parties try to force President Pereda's hand. All major political parties have rejected Pereda's earlier offer to hold an election in January 1980. They are demanding instead that he set a firm date for an election early next year and that he initiate major electoral reforms. So far, Pereda has refused to be bound by a specific timetable--especially one that would immediately make him a lame duck--although he has reiterated his intention to lead the nation toward democracy.

Pereda is clearly on the defensive, and his hold on power remains tenuous. The opposition parties have not only seized the initiative but have also called international attention to their cause. If he remains unresponsive, Pereda will find it more difficult to build support for his government at home and to get badly needed international loans and other economic assistance. These pressures could force him to become less stubborn on the timing of an election.

The military, whose backing is key to Pereda's survival, is divided on the election issue. While the majority of officers--especially those in top positions--apparently are against the idea of holding an election anytime soon, many younger field-grade officers are dissatisfied with the current leadership in both the government and military. Junior officers twice tried to overthrow the previous administration, and Pereda may attempt to appease them either by replacing some of his civilian advisers with military technocrats or by moving the election date forward.

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ASIA

--Iran: The Shah, while visibly shaken by recent events, has reconfirmed his commitment to liberalization and free parliamentary elections in 1979.

Ambassador Sullivan, meeting with the Shah, two cabinet members, and several high-ranking military officers, has found some support, not only within the military but in the cabinet as well, for reimposition of a strong authoritarian regime to suppress the opposition. He also found, however, that a significant group within the leadership, including the Shah, remains determined to press on with political liberalization and social and economic reforms--including a clampdown on official corruption.

The Shah was described by the Ambassador as "tired and unhappy but considerably more spirited" than he had been earlier. He categorically denied that he would abdicate or flee the country and accepted the probability that his nation will be in for a period of terrorist acts, sabotage, and industrial strikes.

The government has presented a new program, emphasizing protection of individual rights, freedom of expression, and creation of "a secure environment" in which free elections can be held. [redacted] 25X1

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--Laos: Lao military pressure is continuing to drive large numbers of Hmong (Meo) tribesmen across the Mekong River into Thailand. The fiercely independent Hmong have resisted government efforts to control and resettle them, but a step-up in military operations in early 1978 drove many from their highland villages and disrupted their spring rice planting. Hungry and exhausted, many opted to flee to Thailand, but starvation and skirmishes with Lao and Vietnamese troops during treks lasting from 10 to 45 days have taken a heavy toll.

Hmong refugees in Thailand tell of Lao air attacks and artillery barrages, as well as repeated ground operations against them by Lao and Vietnamese forces. Although there has been no confirmation, several refugees have reported that the Laotians have used poison gas against the Hmong. Refugees say that chemicals that cause choking, vomiting, diarrhea, and potentially fatal skin burns have been sprayed from light planes and used in rockets fired by aircraft. There have also been reports, again unconfirmed, of the poisoning of water sources in and near Hmong population centers. Lao and Vietnamese forces attempt to interdict Hmong escape routes to the Mekong, and numerous

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refugees have been killed as they attempted to cross the river. In many cases, only slightly more than half of the original group of Hmong setting out have reached Thailand. Many of the approximately 2,000-3,000 refugees escaping from Laos in each of the last several months have been Hmong.

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